

# Chapter Three

## Existing Conditions

### Introduction

The 6.9-acre Mount Gilead property encompasses the Mount Gilead House and garage, a Sears kit house, gardens and ornamental plantings, three modest outbuildings, fencelines, a family cemetery, and a high potential for significant archaeological sites. The property is included within the Centreville Historic Overlay District, which protects, at a local level, the historic resources included within from certain types of development. While the Mount Gilead property is the primary focus of documentation within this chapter, its relationship to the resources of the historic district, of which it is one, is also considered herein.

Documentation of the Mount Gilead landscape is presented below through a combination of narrative text, contemporary photographs, labeled base mapping, and analytical diagrams. To a lesser degree of detail, the landscape associated with the Centreville Historic Overlay District is also documented through narrative description and a feature inventory. The first section of this chapter—Environmental Context and Setting—sets Mount Gilead and Centreville within a regional context by looking at the larger natural systems that affect the community. The second section—Cultural Context and Setting—provides a demographic and geographic context for the community, and describes elements such as regional road corridors, planning and zoning policies, and area demographics. The third section—Mount Gilead Landscape Description by Characteristic—depicts the current conditions and extant landscape features and resources associated with the Mount Gilead property. The features are organized into the following categories:

- landform and topography and natural systems and features;
- topographic modifications;
- spatial organization;
- views and vistas;
- land uses;
- circulation;
- vegetation;
- buildings and structures;
- small-scale features; and
- archaeological resources.

Diagrams, maps, and photographs illustrate many of the features described in the narrative portion of this chapter. Feature locations are indicated on *figure 3-5, Landscape Features, Mount Gilead Property Map*. The locations of photographs are indicated on *figure 3-6, Photographic Station Points Map*. An inventory list of existing landscape features concludes the section.

The fourth and final section of this chapter—Resources Associated with the Centreville Historic Overlay District—describes and inventories the primary features that comprise the Centreville Historic Overlay District surrounding Mount Gilead.

## Environmental Context and Setting

*See figure 3-1, Context and Location Maps.*

Centreville occupies an elevated ridge within western Fairfax County, Virginia. The community sits atop a relative high point within the area. Elevations within the district rise gently from a low point of approximately 325 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL) along Thames Creek, to a high point of 387 feet above MSL atop the knoll occupied by St. John's Episcopal Church. The Mount Gilead property slopes downward from northeast to southwest, with elevations ranging from about 375 feet above MSL to 342 feet above MSL (*see figure 3-2*).

Stormwater generally flows into the drainage corridors of Big and Little Rocky Run located to the north and east of Centreville, and Dowling Creek and Thames Creek, which traverse the district and empty into Big Rocky Run to the west. These streams are drained by Bull Run, located to the south of Centreville (*see figure 3-3*). Bull Run flows into the Occoquan River, which in turn empties into the Potomac River.

The area's hydrology has been heavily affected by development during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which has led to the channelization and culverting of many perennial and intermittent corridors. An increase in impermeable surfaces, coupled with the enhanced velocity caused by channelization, has contributed to heavy erosion of local creek and river banks.

In geological terms, Mount Gilead is located within the Triassic Lowland Province, and abuts the Piedmont Upland Province. The Triassic Lowland Province is underlain by crystalline and sedimentary rocks, particularly sandstone, siltstone, shale, and conglomerates. The geomorphology of this region is exhibited by hilltops that are wide and gently rolling with long, gently sloping sides and nearly level areas. These level areas are often slowly permeable and poorly drained.<sup>1</sup>

Soil types found within the Centreville Historic Overlay District include Manassas, Penn, Penn loam, and Penn shaley-silt loam. Manassas soils consist of sandy, silty, and clayey

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<sup>1</sup> Fairfax County, "Ratings of Soils For Urban Development in Fairfax County," <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/soilrating.htm> (Accessed September 21, 2005).

materials eroded from sandstones and shales that often occur in drainageways. Most of these soils have been used at some point during recorded history to cultivate crops, or for pasture. Locally, these soils are found between the Spindle House and Braddock Road, and on the Havener House property. Woodland associated with this soil type is characteristic of Eastern mixed hardwood forests dominated by oak, hickory, yellow poplar, sweet gum, dogwood, and walnut. Most of the existing woodland within the region is secondary or tertiary growth arising from release of agricultural land.

Three variations of Penn soils occur within the district: sandy and silty soils that occur on hilltops in weathered sandstone; loamy soils that occur on hilltops and sideslopes over red sandstones; and silty to clayey soils that occur on hilltops and sideslopes over shale. Penn sandy/silty soils occur over much of the former Spindle House property. Penn loamy soils characterize much of the northeastern portion of the Mount Gilead property. Penn silty/clayey soils occur in small areas of the Mount Gilead property south of the house and garage. Most of the land associated with Penn soils has been cleared and used for crops over the years. Wooded areas today are dominated by oaks.

## **Cultural Context and Setting**

Fairfax County is a rapidly growing area of suburban and urban development within the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Its proximity to the cities of Alexandria and Arlington, as well as the Pentagon, Reagan National Airport, and Dulles International Airport, has rendered Fairfax County a desirable area for residential and commercial development.

Centreville and the Mount Gilead property are located in the western portion of Fairfax County near its border with Prince William County. Centreville is an oasis of historic features within a surrounding net of major roadways. The community sits less than one mile south of Interstate 66, which connects Washington, D.C., and Front Royal, Virginia. Much of the I-66 corridor is heavily developed with residential subdivisions and commercial areas. Other heavily traveled road corridors that edge Centreville to the south and west are State Routes 28 and 29. The Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan calls for future widening of all three of these routes, as well as the addition of a new road immediately east of the community.

Centreville was initially formed at a major crossroads. Many of the historic routes have been replaced by highways during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the original roads along which Centreville formed—Braddock Road—continues to follow an alignment similar to that which existed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two local roads—Mount Gilead and Wharton Roads—also follow historic alignments.

To protect the core of the historic community of Centreville, including the Mount Gilead property, from incompatible development, the Centreville Historic Overlay District was established in 1986. The district is administered by the County's Architectural Review Board (ARB), which ensures that any alterations made in the area follow guidelines that protect the integrity of identified historic resources. The County's Zoning Ordinance states the following:

Historic Overlay Districts are created for the purpose of promoting the general welfare, education, economic prosperity, and recreational pleasure of the public, through the identification, preservation, and enhancement of those buildings, structures, neighborhoods, landscapes, places, and areas that have special historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological significance...and which have been officially designated by the Board of Supervisors.<sup>2</sup>

The boundary of the district is shown in *figure 3-4, Centreville Historic Overlay District and Mount Gilead*. The five historic properties identified in the district for their contribution to local heritage include Mount Gilead; St. John's Episcopal Church; Harrison House; Havener House; and the Centreville Methodist Church, formerly called the Old Stone Church. The Centreville Historic Overlay District expansion working group is currently considering proposals for expanding the district.

In addition to the restrictive ordinances that apply to the Centreville Historic Overlay District as a whole, Mount Gilead is zoned R-2, a suburban residential designation that allows up to two dwelling units per acre. R-2 zoning also allows certain institutional and community uses, while public utility and quasi-public uses are considered special-exception uses. After the property is transferred to the Fairfax County Park Authority (Park Authority) to administer, a General Management Plan (GMP) will be prepared to guide future use and management of the property as a publicly accessible historical park.

## **Mount Gilead Landscape Description by Characteristic**

*See figure 3-5, Landscape Features, Mount Gilead Property Map, and figure 3-6, Photographic Station Points Map.*

### **Landform and Topography and Natural Systems and Features**

The topography within the Mount Gilead property is fairly level, except near the ruins of the Sedinger House where the land slopes more steeply downward toward Thames Creek (*Photo 1*). Culverted for much of its length (*Photo 2*), Thames Creek is the only perennial water course located on the property. The site of a spring is marked by a springhouse located between the Mount Gilead and Spindle House areas. The quality and quantity of the outflow of the spring is not currently known by the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) team.

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<sup>2</sup> Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, Section 7-201.

## Topographic Modifications

There are no obvious topographic modifications associated with the Mount Gilead property except for the remains of a Civil War-era earthwork located north of the house along Mount Gilead Road (*Photo 3*). The earthwork remnant is maintained in mown turf and appears as a linear mound that extends perpendicularly into the site from the property boundary.

## Spatial Organization

Mount Gilead is comprised of three primary spaces: the Mount Gilead House environs; the Spindle House area; and the woodlands between Mount Gilead and the Spindle House. The Mount Gilead House environs is spatially defined by chain-link fencing that runs north and south of the house; by the condominium property and vegetated buffer to the west and north; and by vegetation and fencing edging Mount Gilead Road to the east and northeast. The Spindle House area is spatially defined by chain-link fencing located to the north of the Spindle House; by Mount Gilead Road to the northeast and southeast; and by woodland to the west.

At a more detailed level, the Mount Gilead House environs is characterized by an internal spatial organization of front yard, back yard, and cemetery. The front yard is divided into two relatively equal halves by the entrance drive corridor edged by an allée of Southern magnolia trees. Trees edge the front yard along Mount Gilead Road and the northern property boundary to the north and west. Within the grassy open space of the front yard there are numerous ornamental trees and shrubs. The house and garage form a node of space at the terminus of the driveway. The back yard south of the house is an open space dotted with walnut trees that is part of a former garden. To the west of the house is an open space with a pond in the center and remnants of ornamental plantings. The Jamesson cemetery space edges the front lawn to the north. The property boundary extends to the north to accommodate the cemetery, which is enclosed by evergreen vegetation and the remains of a perimeter fence (*Photo 4*).

The Spindle House area has its own internal spatial organization. Edged to the west by woodlands, the house sits adjacent to an open, relatively level area encompassed by the 90 degree turn of Mount Gilead Road. The open area east and north of the house is dotted with trees and includes a fenceline that forms a smaller internal space halfway between the house and the abandoned road trace. Another open area surrounds the partially collapsed Sedinger House, which sits on a knoll overlooking Braddock Road. Woodlands occupy the northern part of the parcel behind the house site, which is relatively steeply sloped.

The wooded space behind the Spindle House is divided almost in half by the mulch trail that extends from the Spindle springhouse toward Mount Gilead and the Saunders House located on an adjacent property. Otherwise it is a densely vegetated area.

## Views and Vistas

Mount Gilead's position atop a high point with commanding views of the surrounding countryside is no longer apparent from the ground due to adjacent residential development and an abundance of vegetative growth along the property lines. Much of the surrounding residential development, including the condominiums and new single-family houses located west and north of the Mount Gilead House, is screened by the trees that line the property boundary (*Photos 5 and 6*). Views to new single-family homes are particularly apparent from the northeast corner of the Mount Gilead property, however. A formal vista does exist when looking toward Mount Gilead Road through the Southern magnolia allée along the entrance drive. Within the Mount Gilead House and environs area, open lawn allows for internal views to many of the landscape features due to the minimal amount of vegetation and the level topography.

When standing in the Spindle House area, a broad panoramic view is afforded of the new subdivision along Wharton Road, St. John's Episcopal Church, and a house located across Mount Gilead Road (*Photo 7*). These views are mildly foreshortened by the topography that rises to the east of the Spindle House.

No views are afforded internally or to surrounding properties within the woodland area.

## Land Uses

The Mount Gilead House is currently rented to an individual by the County and the primary land use associated with Mount Gilead at present is residential. The Jamesson family cemetery located on the property, and the possible burials on the Spindle House property constitute cemetery land uses. In the recent past, archaeological investigations have been conducted on the property. These constitute a research land use. There are currently no other land uses occurring on site.

## Circulation

Public roads edge the property. These include Braddock and Mount Gilead Roads. The current entrance into the Mount Gilead property arises from Mount Gilead Road near its intersection with Wharton Road. Historically, the house faced Braddock Road, and was approached from the south. A trace of the former entrance drive remains visible behind the house. Another road trace marks the former property boundary between Mount Gilead and the Spindle House property. It leads southwest from Mount Gilead Road toward Braddock Road.

Within the property, there are few circulation features. Vehicular circulation is comprised of the crushed stone entrance drive leading to the Mount Gilead House from Mount Gilead Road (*Photo 8*). The driveway leads to a circular turn-around in front of the house and a small parking area.

Pedestrian circulation includes a short flagstone path within the driveway island, and the mulch trail that leads through the woodland area between Mount Gilead and the Spindle House (*Photo 9*).

## Vegetation

Vegetation within the Mount Gilead property includes ornamental specimen plantings, screen plantings, and successional woodlands.

Within the Mount Gilead House environs, much of the vegetation is ornamental and garden-like. Five or six Southern magnolia trees (*Magnolia grandiflora*) planted on each side of the drive comprise the allée leading toward the house (*Photo 10*). Some of these trees are clearly in declining health. A grove of mature Eastern redcedar trees (*Juniperus virginiana*) edges the southern row of magnolias.

Mature specimen trees and shrubs dot the turf lawn to the north and northeast of the house. A large Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*); a large holly (*Ilex opaca*); and a large yew (*Taxus sp.*) form an open-spaced row down the center of the north lawn; this row parallels the Southern magnolia allée to its west (*Photo 11*). A second large holly tree stands to the northwest of the Mount Gilead House. Two mature boxwood shrubs (*Buxus sempervirens*) are located adjacent to the northwest corner of the house (*Photo 12*). These shrubs have either been clipped into forms in the past, but are now overgrown, or are oddly shaped due to age.

A vegetated buffer exists along much of the Mount Gilead House property boundary. This buffer contains mature deciduous trees, vines, evergreen shrubs, and a few evergreen trees. Of note is a large silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) found near the Jamesson cemetery; a large holly found in the northwestern corner of the property; and large boxwood shrubs that may have originally been planted as a hedge along the northern fence line and on either side of the cemetery. Other plants associated with the buffer include mulberry (*Morus sp.*); blue spruce (*Picea pungens*); yew (*Taxus sp.*); peach (*Prunus persica*); and fruit-bearing pear (*Pyrus sp.*). While some of the plants that comprise the buffer were likely planted, many are volunteers. Much of this buffer is also overgrown with vines, weeds, and invasive plants.

Vegetation around the Jamesson cemetery was likely arranged in a formal, geometric design at one time, but is now overgrown and infested with weedy vegetation. Yews and boxwood appear to have been planted to frame the entrance. A Carolina hemlock (*Tsuga caroliniana*) grows within the cemetery.

Plantings around the foundation of the Mount Gilead House, all of which appear to be relatively recent additions to the landscape, include azaleas (*Azalea sp.*); yews; osmanthus (*Osmanthus sp.*); Japanese maple (*Acer japonica*); boxwood; and liriope (*Liriope muscari*). These plants are relatively mature and overscaled, often obscuring views of the house (*Photo 13*). Two additional boxwoods are located in the center of the entrance drive turn-around. These have been trimmed to allow passage from the house to the small parking area. The rear of the house contains a small, rectangular open area

enclosed by boxwood and yew hedges (*Photo 14*). A large silver maple is growing between the house and garage.

On the southern side of the white picket fence behind the Mount Gilead House are several trees, including walnuts (*Juglans nigra*); mulberries; and hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*). The number of walnuts in this grouping suggests that this was an intentionally planted grove, although no historical evidence has yet been discovered to support this theory.

The Spindle House area was recently cleared of much of its vegetation. A group of trees remains, however, loosely arranged in a row running northeast to southwest down the middle of the property. This row contains oak (*Quercus spp.*); box elder (*Acer negundo*); and silver maple. English ivy (*Hedera helix*) grows beneath many of the trees. A few cherry trees (*Prunus serotina*); a walnut; and an oak are scattered over the northern portion of the property.

The woodland area contains numerous types of trees, shrubs, and vines. This successional woodland is fraught with invasive species and weedy growth (*Photo 15*). Invasive and problematic vines and groundcovers include the common grapevine (*Vitis spp.*); poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*); periwinkle (*Vinca minor*); Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*); English ivy; and Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*). Other invasive plant species observed during field investigations on behalf of this project include paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*) (*Photo 16*).

## **Buildings and Structures**

The Mount Gilead House is a one-and-one-half story frame building constructed on a stone foundation (*Photo 17*). It has clapboard siding and a side-gabled roof with three gabled dormers and two large exterior gable-end stone chimneys. The windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash with shutters on the main façade. The front and rear façades each have a five-bay porch with a long sloping roof that extends from the main building and is supported on turned wood posts. The front façade has a centrally located wood door. The continuous sloping roofline is characteristic of regional vernacular mid- to late 18<sup>th</sup> century houses in Virginia. A single-story, side-gable addition, constructed in the 1950s, has a shed-roof bay with a fifteen-pane casement window and a wooden door. Originally, the south side of the house fronted a road leading toward the house from Braddock Road; in 1937 the house façade was reversed to face a new entrance drive to the north.

Adjacent to the house is a one-and-one-half story, four-bay frame Colonial Revival garage from the 1930s (*Photo 18*). It has clapboard siding and a gable-end low-pitched roof that extends over the front façade and is supported on turned wood posts that match the porch posts of the main house. The roof has three gabled dormers. An open-side staircase leads up to a second story. The windows are four-over-four, double-hung sash. The building is in the process of being shored up and stabilized by the Fairfax County Department of Public Works (*Photos 19 and 20*).



Two small, single-story Colonial Revival garden outbuildings, known as the summerhouses, sit south of the Mount Gilead House and flank a white picket fence. These structures are wood frame and have clapboard siding, pyramidal roofs, and louvered vents (*Photo 21*). They sit parallel to the house, extending beyond the dwelling to its east and west.

A 20<sup>th</sup> century vertical-board, wood-frame storage shed with a cross-brace wood door and front gable roof stands to the rear of the house.

The Spindle House is a one-and-one-half story Sears kit house (*Photo 22*). It has clapboard siding and multiple gables with asphalt shingles. Three steps lead up to a concrete porch that is no longer extant. A side-gabled addition has an overhanging roof that forms a protected entryway, and metal hoods provide awnings over four windows on the side elevation of the house.

A small springhouse, approximately 6-by-6 feet square, is located to the rear of the Spindle House. It is constructed of mortared local stone and has a modern particle-board door. The enclosure appears to be more recent than the original stone foundation on which the walls of the springhouse stand. The year 1953 is carved in the stone of the structure, although it is not known if this represents a construction date.

A second dwelling associated with the Spindle House property, known as the Sedinger House, recently collapsed (*Photo 23*). The remainder of the structure appears to be a single-story, three-bay wood frame house on a concrete block foundation and with a front gable roof. A three-bay porch supported on wood posts sheltered the front door and rested on a concrete and wood platform.

### **Small-scale Features**

Small-scale features associated with the Mount Gilead property relate primarily to residential uses. They include property boundary demarcation elements, fencing, signage, ornamental garden features, cemetery features, and utility features.

The first small-scale features that are encountered upon entering the Mount Gilead House property are the approximately 2-1/2-foot-square, 4-foot-tall white-washed square stone pillars and wrought iron gates that flank the entrance drive (*Photo 24*). The gates are mounted on the stone pillars. They are ornamental and composed of a frame of more substantial metal bars inset with a series of narrow vertical bars that extend above the top of the frame. A 4-foot-tall interpretive sign, composed of two wood posts framing a central fiberglass panel, is sited adjacent to the northern pillar (*Photo 25*). Chain-link fencing extends southeast from the southern pillar, and continues to enclose much of the site, except where interrupted by other fence types.

A white-painted picket fence forms an ornamental edge to the yard behind the Mount Gilead House (*Photo 26*). The fence is constructed of wood pickets. It extends east-west to meet the two summerhouses.

Two unpainted sandstone pillars—similar to those found at the entrance drive—are located in the woods southeast of the Mount Gilead House (*Photo 27*). These likely marked the former entrance drive located in this area, or were part of a garden that is no longer extant. The remains of a third sandstone pillar, also similar to those found at the entrance to Mount Gilead, are found close to Mount Gilead Road near the northeastern terminus of the row above the Spindle House (*Photo 28*).

A concrete structure, of unknown purpose, is located near the fencing separating the Mount Gilead and Spindle House precincts (*Photo 29*). This feature consists of three very low concrete walls that form an open-ended rectangle. The interior of the feature is filled almost to the top with earth. Markings on top of each wall suggest that some type of fence system may have existed in conjunction with this structure at some point. Chunks of quartzite are also embedded in the tops of the walls. A livestock shelter in poor condition is located in the woods near the pair of sandstone pillars.

A shallow, black-painted, oval concrete pond sits to the west of the Mount Gilead House (*Photo 30*). This pond was dry at the time fieldwork was conducted for this project.

The Jamesson cemetery contains a number of small-scale features. The wrought iron fence that once enclosed the cemetery has now deteriorated (*Photo 31*), although portions remain in place or are stacked on site. A single iron picket stands at the opening to the cemetery, which was likely part of the gate. The fence was made by the Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>3</sup> Markers associated with burials within the cemetery include a large granite obelisk near the center of its open space (*Photo 4*) that contains the names of six individuals buried there. To the southeast of the obelisk is a small area overgrown with vegetation that contains six sets of deteriorated head- and footstones (*Photo 32*). Another headstone, labeled “Krista,” is located just outside the entrance of the cemetery and marks the grave of a past owner’s German Shepherd.

Post-and-rail fencing edges the property’s northwestern boundary nearby (*Photos 33 and 34*). Fencing also separates the earlier boundary line between Mount Gilead and the Spindle House property. An aluminum gate provides access through this fence along Mount Gilead’s southeast property line (*Photo 35*).

Within the Spindle House area, small-scale features include two types of fences. Remnants of a wooden picket fence partially enclose the area to the north (*Photo 36*). Only the wooden posts and a small section of pickets remain. Closer to Mount Gilead Road, this fence changes to ornamental wire supported by metal posts that are adorned with ball finials (*Photo 37*).

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<sup>3</sup> The fence has been identified as a 9R fence, manufactured between 1902 and 1910. The finial is a #55, for which the company, still in operation, has the original mold. The company is in a position to closely replicate the original fence. Personal communication, Michael Rierson and Andrew of Stewart Iron Works, March 2006.

Overhead utility lines supported by standard wood poles traverse the southeastern portion of the property.

### **Archaeological Resources**

Based upon discussions with Fairfax County staff, at least two archaeological investigations have been conducted within the Mount Gilead property since 1990. The first was an investigation of the tanyard site; the second involved excavation of the summer kitchen and possible office site north of the house. These, along the remnant Civil War earthwork in the Mount Gilead front yard area, are known archeological resources. Various parts of the property have the potential to yield additional archaeological information. The missing outbuildings associated with Mount Gilead, the sites of three missing 20<sup>th</sup> century houses, the former tanyards, spring site, and Civil War use of the site are all cultural use areas that have the potential to be further investigated.

Of particular interest is evidence of Civil War-era occupation of the property. The earthwork remnant located to the north of the Mount Gilead House is likely part of the system of defensive works built under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston, C.S.A., in 1861. Along with the defensive works, Johnston established a winter camp for more than 40,000 troops within Centreville between October 1861 and March 1862. Mount Gilead is located in a central position behind the former Confederate defensive line. Civil War artifacts have been found in the yard. Due to the fact that Johnston is traditionally said to have made his headquarters in the Mount Gilead House, it is likely that areas of the property that have not been disturbed have high archaeological potential. Information about later Federal occupation of the site may also be uncovered through additional investigation.

In Spring 2006, the Park Authority began to investigate the likely site of two graves on the Spindle House property based on information provided through oral history with Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Leigh.<sup>4</sup> The Leighs have suggested the location of two marble slabs on the Spindle House property that mark the graves of Margaret Morris and her husband. The Park Authority will continue to investigate and document these burial sites.

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<sup>4</sup> Oral history conducted by Debbie Robison with Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Leigh, March 2006.

## **Inventory of Landscape Features by Characteristic**

This section includes all inventoried landscape features identified at Mount Gilead, both historic and non-historic.

### **Natural Systems and Features**

- Thames Creek
- Spring

### **Topographic Modifications**

- Civil War earthwork

### **Spatial Organization**

- Mount Gilead front yard
- Mount Gilead back yard
- Jamesson cemetery
- Tanyard site
- Spindle House area
- Woodland area

### **Views and Vistas**

- Views of adjacent development
- View of Mount Gilead House from driveway/gate
- Linear view along driveway edged by Southern magnolia trees
- View of St. John's Episcopal Church

### **Land Uses**

- Residential
- Research
- Cemetery

### **Circulation**

- Crushed stone entrance drive
- Flagstone walk leading toward Mount Gilead House entrance
- Former entrance drive trace
- Trace road extending southwest toward Braddock Road from Mount Gilead Road
- Mulch trail through woodland

### **Vegetation**

- Southern magnolia allée
- Ornamental plantings in lawn

- Cemetery plantings
- Walnut grove
- Successional woodland
- Row of trees northeast of Spindle House
- Boundary buffer and screen plantings

### **Buildings and Structures**

- Mount Gilead House
- Mount Gilead garage
- Spindle House
- Springhouse
- Sedinger House ruins (near tanyard site)
- Summerhouses (2)
- Contemporary storage shed

### **Small-scale Features**

- Square stone pillars (5)
- Wrought iron gates at Mount Gilead Road entrance
- Aluminum gate
- Cemetery features: iron fence, obelisk, 6 head- and footstones, marker for pet burial
- Wire fence edging Spindle House area
- Picket fence behind Mount Gilead House
- Concrete pond
- Boundary fence (chain link, wood rail)
- Interpretive sign
- Wire fencing north of Spindle House

### **Known Archaeological Resources**

- Civil War earthwork, including parapet and ditch remnants
- Summer kitchen site behind Mount Gilead House
- Former house site near Spindle House (Swortzel House)
- Former barn site at Spindle House
- Adams/Jamesson Tanyard
- Sedinger House ruins
- Other outbuildings described in insurance records may be represented in the archaeological record, including the office, which may have been located north of the Mount Gilead garage
- Potential burials, Margaret Morris and her husband, on Spindle House property

## **Resources Associated with the Centreville Historic Overlay District**

The Centreville community exhibits a long and important history ranging from its early 19<sup>th</sup> century establishment to its role in the Civil War and the Battles of First and Second Manassas, which were both fought with Centreville as a backdrop. The Centreville Historic Overlay District is a contiguous area that extends over approximately 17 acres in the vicinity of the Mount Gilead and Braddock Road intersection. Access to the district occurs primarily via Braddock Road from Route 29, also known as the Lee Highway. Five historic buildings are cited as key historic elements of the district: Havener House, St. John's Episcopal Church, Mount Gilead House, Harrison House, and the Centreville Methodist Church, also known as the Old Stone Church. Additional features that contribute to the significance of the local district include cemeteries, remnant Civil War earthworks, the sites of dwellings occupied by Confederate and Federal officers and troops during the Civil War, tanyard sites and sites of former dwellings and business establishments; and historic road alignments such as Braddock and Mount Gilead Roads. In addition, the historic features of the Mount Gilead property contribute to the district.

The roads that traverse the district include Braddock Road, which serves as the heart of the community, Mount Gilead Road, which curves around the Mount Gilead property, and Wharton Road, which leads northeast behind St. John's Episcopal Church. These are all two-lane asphalt roadways. Properties that front Braddock Road include, from west to east, the Centreville Methodist Church; Havener House; the tanyard and Sedinger House on the Mount Gilead property; the Mohler House site, which is now occupied by office buildings; the Harrison House and an associated outbuilding; the Eagle/Newgate Tavern site, which is now occupied by the Chambliss Law Office; a small stone house moved on site from Route 29, which is thought to have been constructed from materials salvaged from the Grigsby House; and the Utterback House. To the south of the district lies a stone wall and pillars associated with the entrance to the former Royal Oaks House property, the original extension of Braddock Road, which has recently been altered to establish a 90 degree intersection with Route 29, and the ca. 1930s Payne's Market. Mount Gilead Road intersects Braddock Road to the north midway through the district. Along this section of Mount Gilead Road is an abandoned mid-20<sup>th</sup> century house located across from the Spindle House. The road subsequently extends northeast, terminating in a view of St. John's Episcopal Church. As it approaches the church, Mount Gilead Road makes a 90-degree turn to the northwest as it wraps around the Mount Gilead property. An extension of this road leads southeast toward the Royal Oaks property. New housing edges the road as it travels northwest past the Mount Gilead property. Wharton Road leads northeast along the edge of the St. John's Episcopal Church property. Single-family dwellings edge this road to the northeast.

The two water courses associated with the district are Thames Creek and Dowling Branch, which feeds into Thames Creek. They exist as narrow, rocky swales, with sections that are culverted and therefore not currently visible. Both arise in proximity to Braddock Road. Thames Creek begins to the southeast of the district and crosses the Havener House property as it flows northwest across the district. Only a small portion of Dowling Branch is associated with the district near its confluence with Thames Creek.

Vegetation associated with the district ranges from manicured lawn to ornamental plantings, young woodlands, and scrubby thickets. Most properties include a mix of lawn, shade trees, evergreen trees, shrub masses, and/or foundation plantings. There is a grove of trees that surrounds the Centreville Methodist Church, while small, densely wooded areas are present north of the Utterback House site, southwest of the Chambliss Law Office, and behind the Centreville Methodist Church. There is one large oak tree growing along the southeastern boundary of the district, which may have been associated with the adjacent Royal Oaks property.

The native and ornamental plants observed to date in the Centreville Historic Overlay District include:

*Trees*

- White walnut (*Juglans cinerea*)
- Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*)
- Southern magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- White pine (*Pinus strobus*)
- Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)
- Oak (*Quercus spp.*)

*Shrubs*

- Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*)

*Vines*

- Common grapevine (*Vitis spp.*)
- Poison ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*)

*Groundcover*

- English ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

*Invasive species*

- Bamboo (species undetermined)
- Paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*)
- Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
- Japanese stilt grass (*Microstegium vimineum*)
- English ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

The Havener House is a two-story frame dwelling constructed sometime prior to the Civil War. The house is traditionally thought to have been used by both Confederate and Federal forces during the Civil War Battles of First and Second Manassas. The Havener House was reportedly used as an aid station or hospital.

The Harrison House is a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, two-story frame dwelling. It was reported that St. John's Episcopal Church services were held here during the war while the church was occupied by troops. The property includes an outbuilding.

St. John's Episcopal Church was originally built in 1851. The early structure, which was used as a hospital during the Civil War, was damaged during the war. The current church was built on the original foundation circa 1867. The church includes a ca. 1956-57 addition. The property includes a cemetery to its northwest. Approximately 175 graves are marked within the cemetery. The earliest gravestone is dated 1850.

The Centreville Methodist Church was originally built in 1855. It is traditionally thought to have served as a hospital for Federal and Confederate troops during the Civil War Battles of First and Second Manassas. The church was destroyed during the Battle of Second Manassas and rebuilt in 1870. The church is now known as the Church of the Ascension.

The district is also associated with the 1861–62 Confederate winter encampment of 40,000 soldiers behind earthen fortifications constructed in October 1861. The Confederates built a large number of huts, some of which were semi-subterranean. Centreville was later occupied by Federal troops, and was the object of raids by Confederate ranger leader John Singleton Mosby. The district includes many of the places where relic hunters have, over the years, found evidence of the Confederate camps, particularly along Wharton Lane. While a portion of the camp falls within the Centreville Historic Overlay District, a portion outside the district has recently been lost to development. There are undeveloped areas nearby that likely contain further evidence of the encampment. Generally, any areas within the district that have not been developed have a high potential for Civil War cultural resources. Other archaeological sites associated with the district include the Mohler House site, Newgate or Eagle Tavern site, Buckey's Tanyard, and the Wapping store (location not yet determined). The adjacent Royal Oaks House site may also possess archaeological potential.

The district is now surrounded by extensive commercial and high-density residential development. Many of the Civil War earthworks have been lost or compromised over the past twenty years. To avoid additional loss, and to ensure that future development is sensitive to the community's heritage, expansion of the district has been proposed.

The landscape resources associated with the district include:

### **Natural Systems and Features**

- Springs
- Thames Creek
- Dowling Branch

### **Topographic Modifications**

- Civil War fortification remnants

### **Spatial Organization**

- Braddock Road streetscape



### **Views and Vistas**

- Views of Route 29 from district
- Views of Route 28 from district
- Views along Braddock Road
- Views along Mount Gilead Road
- Views along Wharton Road
- Views of the mountains

### **Land Uses**

- Residential
- Commercial
- Religious
- Cemetery

### **Circulation**

- Braddock Road
- William Peterson Way
- Mount Gilead Road
- Wharton Lane
- Trace roads

### **Vegetation**

- Ornamental plantings, shade trees, and evergreen trees associated with residences
- Successional woodland
- Dense woodland north of the Utterback House site and south of the Chambliss Law Office
- Grove at Centreville Methodist Church
- Large oaks at Royal Oaks
- Ornamental plantings at St. John's Episcopal Church Cemetery
- Turf lawns

### **Buildings and Structures**

- Mount Gilead House
- Havener House
- Harrison House
- Harrison House outbuilding
- Utterback House
- St. John's Episcopal Church
- Centreville Methodist Church (Old Stone Church/Church of the Ascension)
- Chambliss Law Office

- Small stone house moved to the site
- Office buildings on Mohler House site
- Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century house across from Spindle House
- Payne's Market

#### **Small-scale Features**

- Stone wall associated with Royal Oaks
- Stone wall at St. John's Episcopal Church
- Headstones at St. John's Episcopal Church cemetery
- Stone-lined gutter at Centreville Methodist Church
- Small grave site behind Centreville Methodist Church
- Signage

#### **Known Archaeological Resources**

- 1861-62 Confederate winter encampment site, later Civil War occupation
- Confederate earthworks remnants
- Mohler House site
- Newgate or Eagle Tavern site
- Buckey's Tanyard
- Wapping store (location not precisely known)
- Royal Oaks House site (nearby)